

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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TAGS: EAID, EAGR, EGEN, IV

SUBJ: MEETING WITH MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, SAWADOGO

REFS: A. STATE 92131; B. ABIDJAN 2825; C. ABIDJAN 2741

D. ABIDJAN 2578

1. DURING MY OFFICIAL CALL MAY 22 ON MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, SAWADOGO, WE DISCUSSED HIS IMPRESSIONS OF RECENT TRIP TO US AND GOIC PLANS FOR FOLLOW UP ON REQUEST FOR USG AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE. SAWADOGO WAS VERY PLEASED WITH HIS VISIT, APPRECIATIVE OF WARM RECEPTION, AND PLANS TO PROCEED RAPIDLY WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF SOYBEAN PROGRAM.

2. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION ON HOW PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY RESPONDED TO THE MINISTER'S TRIP REPORT, SAWADGO REPLIED THE PRESIDENT WAS "SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED." HE BELIEVED THAT WHERE "PEANUTS GROW, SOYBEANS WILL GROW." SEE PARA 2A, REFTTEL B) AND DID NOT REALIZE THAT SOYBEAN CULTIVATION REQUIRES A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER DEGREE OF TECHNOLOGICAL INPUT THAN PEANUT CULTIVATION. SAWADOGO ADDED HE HOPED EXPERTS (SEE BELOW) WILL BE ABLE TO EDUCATE PRESIDENT, THUS LEADING HIM TO ADOPT A MORE REALISTIC SOYBEAN PROGRAM.

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3. SAWADOGO STATED GOIC HAS ENGAGED A CHICAGO FIRM, FISHER, AS CONSULTANT FOR SOYBEAN CULTIVATION. MR. FISHER OF THIS COMPANY ARRIVES JUNE 2 TO DO A PRELIMINARY STUDY. DIRECTOR OF CYMMIT WILL VISIT IVORY COAST IN JULY AND UNIVERSITY OF PURDUE PROFESSOR WILL COME IN AUGUST. SAWADOGO HAS ALSO INVITED MR. LOGAN OF USDA TO DISCUSS QUESTION OF RESTRUCTURING AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN IVORY COAST. GOIC HOPES TO TRAIN IN US UNIVERSITIES 20 TO 50 IVORIANS IN A BROAD RANGE OF AGRICULTURAL SPECIALTIES. GOIC WANTS TO ADOPT AMERICAN METHOD OF AGRICULTURAL TRAINING SINCE IN SAWADOGO'S VIEW IT IS FAR SUPERIOR TO FRENCH SYSTEM. REGARDING FINANCING FOR TRAINEES, PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY HAS AGREED TO PAY, ALTHOUGH GOIC HOPES AID WILL FINANCE SOME PORTION. GOIC WILL SHORTLY TRANSMIT FORMAL REQUEST FOR AID ASSISTANCE TO EMBASSY FOR FORWARDING TO WASHINGTON. MINISTER ADDED THAT DURING HIS VISIT AID TOOK A "PRUDENT" POSITION REGARDING EXTENT OF POSSIBLE FINANCING; HOWEVER, HE HAS THE IMPRESSION THAT AID "CAN DO MORE."

4. REGARDING QUANTITY OF SOYBEANS IVORY COAST PLANS TO PRODUCE, SAWADOGO CANDIDLY STATED THAT 500,000 METRIC TONS FIGURE HE CITED IN WASHINGTON WAS "FRIGHTENING." HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT IVORY COAST HAS YET TO ESTABLISH A TIME FRAME FOR THIS TARGET AND INDEED MIGHT CONSIDERABLY SCALE DOWN ITS OBJECTIVE AFTER STUDYING PRICING AND MARKETING QUESTIONS. REGARDING USDA CONCERNS THAT IVORY COAST WOULD COMPETE WITH US IN SOYBEAN EXPORTS, MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT MUCH OF IVORIAN SOYBEAN PRODUCTION WOULD BE USED AS CATTLE FEED IN IVORY COAST AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND NOT FOR EXPORT TO EUROPE. THE PRESIDENT WANTED TO FIGHT FAMINE WHICH THREATENED SAHEL REGION AND WANTED TO EXPORT MEAT TO EUROPE, NOT SOYBEANS. SAWADOGO ADDED THAT GOIC POLICY IS COOPERATION AMONG COMMODITY-PRODUCING COUNTRIES; THEREFORE GOIC WOULD CONTINUALLY CONSULT WITH USG REGARDING PRODUCTION AND EXPORT MATTERS.

5. REGARDING EQUIPMENT PURCHASES, GOIC PLANS TO BUY IN US PORTABLE METAL SILOS FOR CORN STORAGE AND AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY UNSPECIFIED. GOIC IS SEEKING EXIM FINANCING; TIMING IS COMPLICATED BY LONG DELAYS IN EQUIPMENT DELIVERY.

6. COMMENT: I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT SAWADOGO WAS MOST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PLEASED WITH HIS VISIT AND AT PRESIDENT'S INSISTENCE WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE MATTER VIGOROUSLY. I BELIEVE GOIC'S 500,000 METRIC TONS SOYBEAN PRODUCTION TARGET IS UNREALISTIC AND AFTER COMPLETION AND EXAMINATION OF TECHNICAL STUDIES, GOIC WILL CONSIDERABLY SCALE DOWN TARGET. THE PROBLEM APPARENTLY IS TO CONVINCE HOUPHOUET (WHO PROBABLY ARBITRARILY SET FIGURE) THAT TECHNOLOGICAL AND OTHER FACTORS DICTATE A LOWER OBJECTIVE. GOIC REQUESTS FOR AGRICULTURAL TRAINING ARE ALSO PROBABLY

ON HIGH SIDE DUE TO LACK OF SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF PRE-QUALIFIED
IVORIANS. HOWEVER, I WOULD URGE THAT AID AND USDA BE AS FORTH-
COMING AS POSSIBLE IN RESPONDING TO GOIC TRAINING REQUESTS SINCE
PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING OF IVORIAN AGRICULTURAL TRAINING SHOULD
LEAD TO INCREASED IVORIAN IMPORTS OF US AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY
AND EQUIPMENT.

7. EMBASSY GRATIFIED BY IMPRESSIVE USDA/STATE/AID TURNOUT AND
SERIOUS, POSITIVE ATTENTION PAID TO SAWADOGO DURING HIS VISIT
TO NORTH AMERICA.
SMITH

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